**AUGUST/SEPTEMBER**

***Clarify “What is a professional learning community.”***

**“The process of creating a professional learning community is inherently dynamic and inefficient, and those who think that they can reduce it to a recipe for success are bound to be frustrated. “ DuFour & Eaker**

***The term professional learning communities “has become so commonplace and has been used so ambiguously to describe any loose coupling of individuals who share a common interest in education that it is in danger of losing all meaning.”***

**DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many**

**As Michael Fullen has observed, “Terms travel well, but the underlying *conceptualization and thinking* do not.”**

* **Review/continue to build shared knowledge of PLC characteristics and its links to research on effective schooling practices**
* **Build shared knowledge of the current reality of MCPS and your school**
* **Develop the administrative leadership team as a guiding coalition**
* **Establish common vocabulary**

***Possible Bumps***

* **Assuming that just because *I* understand or that everyone has read PLC books or attended PLC workshops, *everyone* understands**
* **Not understanding how district initiatives, particularly PLC practices, fit or connect; a lack of conceptualization about the big picture**
* **Settling for PLC lite: doing bits and pieces of the work of professional learning communities**

***Things to Do***

* **Build shared knowledge of PLC characteristics and its links to research on effective schooling practices**
* **Build shared knowledge of the current reality in our district/school.**
* **Develop a guiding coalition.**
* **Establish a common vocabulary.**
* **Have continuous professional development specifically focused on PLCs**
* **Send frequent e-mails district wide to explain the importance of particular PLC concepts and how they fit with district initiatives**
* **Purchase resources—books, videos**
* **Have broad attendance at PLC workshops and activities**
* **Develop a district wide PLC newsletter**
* **Familiarize everyone with and frequently used** [**www.allthingsplc.info**](http://www.allthingsplc.info)
* **Communicate, communicate, communicate**
* **Clear up misunderstandings immediately and *in writing***
* **Practice…DRIP….DRIP….DRIP**
* **Practice…How hard… How much…. How fast**

***Why Establish a Professional Learning Community?***

**“To be effective, leadership has to in part “be ultimately assessed by the extent to which it awakens people’s intrinsic commitment, which is none other than the mobilizing of everyone’s sense of moral purpose.” Michael Fullen**

**The fundamental purpose of a school or school district that functions as a professional learning community is to ensure high levels of learning for all—students and adults alike.**

**Answer why do we exist?**

* **Articulates a moral purpose.**
* **Commit to ensuring high levels of learning for all—students and adults alike.**

***Possible Bumps***

* **Viewing professional learning communities as “just one more thing to do”**
* **Confusing “becoming a professional learning community” with the mission of “ensuring high levels of learning for all—both students and adults”**
* **Developing the attitude: “We already do this PLC stuff. Working in teams isn’t new to us.”**
* **Confusing a written mission statement with taking action.**

***Things to Do***

* **Articulate a moral purpose.**
* **Commit to ensuring high levels of learning for all—students and adults alike.**
* **Constantly and consistently remind people of why we are doing this work—especially in writing.**
* **Publicly recognize and celebrate incremental learning gains.**